

Press Release

HARFORD COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Department of Emergency Services



PUBLIC SAFETY

"Ensuring a Safe
Harford"

EDUCATION

"Preparing Now,
Building for the Future"

EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT

"Governing Smarter"

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

"Growing and Sustaining
Harford's Prosperity"

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

"Protecting Our
Environment"

QUALITY LIVING

"Safeguarding What is
Important to Harford
County Citizens"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 25, 2014

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Melissa Blessing Receives "Above and Beyond the Call" Award

(Forest Hill, MD) - - Melissa Blessing a Public Safety Dispatcher III and Training Specialist with the Harford County Department of Emergency Services has received the first-ever *"Above and Beyond the Call"* award for the department. Ms. Blessing, a fourteen year veteran of the Department was nominated by Robert B. Thomas, Jr., Coordinator of Community Outreach.

The *"Above and Beyond the Call"* award was established by Director Russell J. Strickland to recognize and pay tribute to employees that go beyond the requirements of their job duties or assignments and assists the Department as necessary to fulfill the Department's mission.

In addition to her assigned duties, primarily a dispatcher and training specialist, Ms. Blessing has pursued training as a public life safety educator and public information officer. Ms. Blessing is a graduate of the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) Advanced Public Information Officer course at Emmitsburg as well as a graduate of the National Fire Academy *"Community Risk Issues and Prevention Interventions"* course. During the past six months Ms. Blessing assisted with or was the primary presenter of six community outreach events hosted by the Department of Emergency Services.

Additionally, as a result of severe winter weather conditions in early December and again in January, Ms. Blessing reported for duty in the 911 Center to fill in for other telecommunicators and provided additional staff support. During one winter storm event, Ms. Blessing reported to the 911 Center at 2:30 a.m. and remained in the dispatch center until mid-morning, then returned later that same day for a second tour of duty.

In his nomination of Ms. Blessing, Mr. Thomas wrote, "Whether there is an event requiring activation of the Emergency Operation Center, a public life safety education presentation or public information duties, all of which are *"above and beyond the call"* of her regular assigned duties, Ms. Blessing comes forward to assist the Department".

(more)

Melissa Blessing Receives “Above and Beyond the Call” Award
February 25, 2014
Page Two

Commenting on the selection of Melissa Blessing as recipient of the Department of Emergency Services first ***“Above and Beyond the Call”*** award, Director Strickland said, “Melissa is an exemplary employee. She comes to work every day with a positive “can do” attitude and performs above and beyond what is expected. We congratulate Melissa and look forward to her continued distinguished service with the Department of Emergency Service”, Strickland added.

- 30 -

The Mission of the Department of Emergency Services is provide quality emergency and support services to address the public safety needs of citizens, businesses and emergency responders in Harford County. Our services will be delivered in a manner that is professional and reflects our commitment to excellence.

“Preserving Harford’s past; promoting Harford’s future”